

towns primarily dependent on agriculture, our state, like West Virginia, has shown phenomenal industrial growth over the last few decades. Fortunately, I think, this industrial growth has not produced large and congested urban areas. Our industry has mostly centered on textiles and has enriched a large area of piedmont Carolina, allowing its population for the most part to continue living in a rural-urban society.

This gives the people a certain independence and security. In many cases families are engaged both in agricultural and industrial occupations. Many grow much of their food while at the same time working in factories. This, I believe, is conducive to the happy life. I have heard mill workers say they feel that if everything else fails them, they can still turn to the land for employment.

North Carolina is no longer tied exclusively to the rise and fall of the one-crop economy of the Old South. We are blending our diversified agricultural development with our fast-growing industrial progress. In the Old North State we have an opportunity to show what industry and agriculture can do, working side by side. We hope to continue to avoid the congested housing conditions which blight the larger industrial areas of the East. We are doing it by keeping our population living on the farms and working in the factories.

I believe this is the hope of all the architects of our future economy. In this atomic age they are calling for the dispersal of industry—a sort of “back to the farm” movement for our great concentrations of wealth and population.

But I had not meant to spend so much time telling you about my native state. I meant only to show you that we in North Carolina feel a great optimism about the future of our state and the future of our region.

This optimism is based on the sound reasoning that the southeastern United States is steadily improving its population in per capita wealth, in industrialization, and in farm progress—as compared with other states.

The South is steeped in the tragedies of the 1860's and naturally has had farther to travel than many other sections. I feel no hesitancy in telling you this afternoon that our region is moving rapidly to the forefront. Ten years after President Roosevelt proclaimed us to be the nation's number one economic problem, we are showing our eligibility for a new title: The nation's number one economic opportunity.